

Senate Bill No. 659

CHAPTER 192

An act to amend Sections 7500.3, 7507.6, and 7508.4 of the Business and Professions Code, to add Sections 2984.6 and 2993 to the Civil Code, to add Sections 3357, 15103, and 22329.5 to the Financial Code, and to amend Sections 14602.6, 14602.7, and 22850.5 of, and to add Section 11724 to, the Vehicle Code, relating to collateral recovery, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

[Approved by Governor September 7, 2007. Filed with
Secretary of State September 7, 2007.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 659, Calderon. Repossessors.

Existing law, the Collateral Recovery Act, provides for the licensure and regulation of repossession agencies by the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services under the supervision and control of the Director of Consumer Affairs. The act provides that a repossession agency does not include the legal owner of specified collateral. With regard to collateral that is required to be registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles, the act requires the legal owner to be listed on the records with the Department of Motor Vehicles. The act requires a notice to be mailed to the Chief of the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services within 7 days of a licensee or its employees being involved in a violent act in the scope of his or her employment, as specified. The act authorizes the Director of Consumer Affairs to assess administrative fines if a licensee fails to submit that notice.

This bill would provide that the legal owner of collateral that is required to be registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles shall include the seller or lessor named on a valid conditional sales contract or rental or lease agreement if the seller or lessor is a licensed vehicle dealer. The bill would require a licensee who was involved or whose employee was involved in a violent act or a threatened violent act while in the scope of his or her employment to mail a copy of the notice indicating that fact to the person who made the assignment to the licensee, as specified. The bill would authorize the director to assess specified administrative fines if a licensee fails to mail the copy of that notice. The bill would prohibit a holder of a lease contract, or a bank, credit union, finance lender, or vehicle dealer from assigning a reposessor to repossess a vehicle connected with an incident of violence notice without simultaneously advising the reposessor of the information contained in the notice. Because a willful violation of this prohibition by a credit union or a finance lender would be a crime, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

Existing law provides that a peace officer or, in certain other cases, a magistrate, may cause the removal and seizure of a vehicle, as specified. Existing law provides that a vehicle so seized may be impounded for 30 days. Under existing law, a vehicle removed and seized may be released to the legal owner or the legal owner's agent prior to the end of 30 days' impoundment if certain conditions are met, including, but not limited to, the requirement that the legal owner or the legal owner's agent present a copy of the assignment, as defined, and either a certificate of repossession for the vehicle, a security agreement for the vehicle, or title showing proof of legal ownership for the vehicle. Existing law prohibits an impounding agency from requiring any of these documents to be notarized. Existing law authorizes an impounding agency to require the agent of a legal owner to produce a copy of his or her repossession agency license. Existing law provides that an impounding agency that complies with certain requirements is not liable to a registered owner of a vehicle for the improper release of the vehicle, as specified.

This bill would additionally make these provisions applicable to a law enforcement agency or a person acting on behalf of the law enforcement agency or impounding agency.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

This bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 7500.3 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

7500.3. A repossession agency shall not include any of the following:

(a) Any bank subject to the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Financial Institutions of the State of California under Division 1 (commencing with Section 99) of the Financial Code or the Comptroller of the Currency of the United States.

(b) Any person organized, chartered, or holding a license or authorization certificate to make loans pursuant to the laws of this state or the United States who is subject to supervision by any official or agency of this state or the United States.

(c) An attorney at law in performing his or her duties as an attorney at law.

(d) The legal owner of collateral that is subject to a security agreement or a bona fide employee employed exclusively and regularly by the legal owner of collateral that is subject to a security agreement. With regard to collateral subject to registration under the Vehicle Code, the legal owner

shall be the legal owner listed on the records of the Department of Motor Vehicles or the seller or lessor named on a valid conditional sales contract or rental or lease agreement if the seller or lessor is a licensed vehicle dealer as defined in Section 285 of the Vehicle Code.

(e) An officer or employee of the United States of America, or of this state or a political subdivision thereof, while the officer or employee is engaged in the performance of his or her official duties.

(f) A qualified certificate holder or a registrant when performing services for, or on behalf of, a licensee.

SEC. 2. Section 7507.6 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

7507.6. (a) Within seven days after a violent act has occurred involving a licensee, or any officer, partner, qualified certificate holder, registrant or employee of a licensee, while acting within the course and scope of his or her employment or contract, that results in a police report or bodily harm or bodily injury, the licensee or the licensee's qualified certificate holder or registrant, shall mail or deliver to the chief a notice concerning the incident upon a form provided by the bureau.

(b) Within seven days after the occurrence of a violent act or a threatened violent act involving a licensee, or any officer, partner, qualified certificate holder, registrant, or employee of a licensee while acting within the course and scope of his or her employment or contract, that results in a police report or bodily harm or bodily injury, the licensee or the licensee's qualified certificate holder or registrant shall send by certified mail, return receipt requested, a notice containing information about the incident to the person or individual who made the assignment. If the assignor is not the legal owner, the assignor shall notify the legal owner of the contents of the notice.

(c) A licensee, qualified certificate holder, or registrant may send the notice set forth in subdivision (b) for a violent act or threatened violent act even if a police report is not made or no bodily harm or bodily injury occurs. Any notice of a threatened violent act provided pursuant to subdivision (b) may only be used to notify a subsequent assignee and not for any collateral purpose. Nothing in this subdivision or subdivision (b) shall be construed to provide immunity against any claim for defamation.

SEC. 3. Section 7508.4 of the Business and Professions Code is amended to read:

7508.4. The director may assess administrative fines for any of the following prohibited acts:

(a) Conducting business from any location other than that location to which a license was issued or conducting a business as an individual, partnership, limited liability company, or corporation unless the licensee holds a valid license issued to that exact same individual, partnership, limited liability company, or corporation. The fine shall be one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for each violation.

(b) Aiding or abetting an unlicensed reposessor or assigning his or her license. "Assigning his or her license" means that no licensee shall permit a registrant, employee, or agent in his or her own name to advertise, engage

clients, furnish reports, or present bills to clients, or in any manner whatsoever to conduct business for which a license is required under this chapter. The fine shall be one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for each violation.

(c) Failing to register registrants within 15 days. The fine shall be two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for each of the first two violations and one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for each violation thereafter.

(d) Employing a person whose registration has expired or been revoked, denied, suspended, or canceled, if the bureau has furnished a listing of these persons to the licensee. The fine shall be twenty-five dollars (\$25) for each violation.

(e) Failing to notify the bureau, within 30 days, of any change in officers. A notice of warning shall be issued for the first violation. Thereafter, the fine shall be twenty-five dollars (\$25) for each violation.

(f) Failing to present the debtor with an itemized receipt of payment, if payment is made in lieu of repossession. The fine shall be twenty-five dollars (\$25) for the first violation and one hundred dollars (\$100) for each violation thereafter.

(g) Failing to submit the notices regarding a violent act or threatened violent act within seven days pursuant to Section 7507.6 or to submit a copy of a judgment awarded against the licensee for an amount of more than the then prevailing maximum claim that may be brought in small claims court within seven days pursuant to Section 7507.7. The fine shall be twenty-five dollars (\$25) for the first violation and one hundred dollars (\$100) per violation thereafter.

(h) Failing to include the licensee's name, address, and license number in any advertisement. A notice of warning shall be issued for the first violation. Thereafter, the fine shall be twenty-five dollars (\$25) for each violation.

(i) Failing to maintain personal effects for at least 60 days. The fine shall be twenty-five dollars (\$25) for the first violation and one hundred dollars (\$100) for each violation thereafter.

(j) Failing to provide a personal effects list or a notice of seizure within the time limits set forth in Section 7507.9 or 7507.10. The fine shall be twenty-five dollars (\$25) for the first violation and one hundred dollars (\$100) for each violation thereafter.

(k) Failing to file the required report pursuant to Section 28 of the Vehicle Code. The fine shall be twenty-five dollars (\$25) for each of the first five violations and one hundred dollars (\$100) for each violation thereafter, per audit.

(l) Failing to maintain an accurate record and accounting of secure temporary registration forms. The qualified certificate holder shall be fined twenty-five dollars (\$25) for the first violation, one hundred dollars (\$100) for the second violation, two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for the third violation, and two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) plus a one-year suspension of the privilege to issue temporary registrations pursuant to Section 7506.9 for the fourth and subsequent violations.

(m) Representing that a licensee has an office and conducts business at a specific address when that is not the case. The fine shall be five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for each violation.

(n) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the money in the Private Security Services Fund that is attributable to administrative fines imposed pursuant to subdivision (c) shall not be continuously appropriated and shall be available for expenditure only upon appropriation by the Legislature.

SEC. 4. Section 2984.6 is added to the Civil Code, to read:

2984.6. A holder of a conditional sales contract, purchase order, or security interest, or the agent of a holder, who has received a notice pursuant to Section 7507.6 of the Business and Professions Code, shall not make a subsequent assignment to skip trace, locate, or repossess the vehicle without simultaneously, and in the same manner by which the assignment is given, advising the assignee of the assignment of the information contained in the notice. As used in this section, “assignment” has the same meaning set forth in Section 7500.1 of the Business and Professions Code.

SEC. 5. Section 2993 is added to the Civil Code, to read:

2993. A holder of a lease contract, or the agent of a holder, who has received a notice pursuant to Section 7507.6 of the Business and Professions Code, shall not make a subsequent assignment to skip trace, locate, or repossess the vehicle without simultaneously, and in the same manner by which the assignment is given, advising the assignee of the assignment of the information contained in the notice. As used in this section, “assignment” has the same meaning set forth in Section 7500.1 of the Business and Professions Code.

SEC. 6. Section 3357 is added to the Financial Code, to read:

3357. A bank, or the agent of a bank, that has received a notice pursuant to Section 7507.6 of the Business and Professions Code, shall not make a subsequent assignment to skip trace, locate, or repossess a vehicle without simultaneously, and in the same manner by which the assignment is given, advising the assignee of the assignment of the information contained in the notice. As used in this section, “assignment” has the same meaning set forth in Section 7500.1 of the Business and Professions Code.

SEC. 7. Section 15103 is added to the Financial Code, to read:

15103. A credit union, or the agent of a credit union, that has received a notice pursuant to Section 7507.6 of the Business and Professions Code, shall not make a subsequent assignment to skip trace, locate, or repossess a vehicle without simultaneously, and in the same manner by which the assignment is given, advising the assignee of the assignment of the information contained in the notice. As used in this section, “assignment” has the same meaning set forth in Section 7500.1 of the Business and Professions Code.

SEC. 8. Section 22329.5 is added to the Financial Code, to read:

22329.5. A licensee, or the agent of a licensee, that has received a notice pursuant to Section 7507.6 of the Business and Professions Code, shall not make a subsequent assignment to skip trace, locate, or repossess the vehicle without simultaneously, and in the same manner by which the assignment

is given, advising the assignee of the assignment of the information contained in the notice. As used in this section, “assignment” has the same meaning set forth in Section 7500.1 of the Business and Professions Code.

SEC. 9. Section 11724 is added to the Vehicle Code, to read:

11724. A dealer, or the agent of a dealer, who has received a notice pursuant to Section 7507.6 of the Business and Professions Code, shall not make a subsequent assignment to skip trace, locate, or repossess a vehicle without simultaneously, and in the same manner by which the assignment is given, advising the assignee of the assignment of the information contained in the notice. As used in this section, “assignment” has the same meaning set forth in Section 7500.1 of the Business and Professions Code.

SEC. 10. Section 14602.6 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

14602.6. (a) (1) Whenever a peace officer determines that a person was driving a vehicle while his or her driving privilege was suspended or revoked, driving a vehicle while his or her driving privilege is restricted pursuant to Section 13352 or 23575 and the vehicle is not equipped with a functioning, certified interlock device, or driving a vehicle without ever having been issued a driver’s license, the peace officer may either immediately arrest that person and cause the removal and seizure of that vehicle or, if the vehicle is involved in a traffic collision, cause the removal and seizure of the vehicle without the necessity of arresting the person in accordance with Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 22650) of Division 11. A vehicle so impounded shall be impounded for 30 days.

(2) The impounding agency, within two working days of impoundment, shall send a notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the legal owner of the vehicle, at the address obtained from the department, informing the owner that the vehicle has been impounded. Failure to notify the legal owner within two working days shall prohibit the impounding agency from charging for more than 15 days’ impoundment when the legal owner redeems the impounded vehicle. The impounding agency shall maintain a published telephone number that provides information 24 hours a day regarding the impoundment of vehicles and the rights of a registered owner to request a hearing.

(b) The registered and legal owner of a vehicle that is removed and seized under subdivision (a) or their agents shall be provided the opportunity for a storage hearing to determine the validity of, or consider any mitigating circumstances attendant to, the storage, in accordance with Section 22852.

(c) Any period in which a vehicle is subjected to storage under this section shall be included as part of the period of impoundment ordered by the court under subdivision (a) of Section 14602.5.

(d) (1) An impounding agency shall release a vehicle to the registered owner or his or her agent prior to the end of 30 days’ impoundment under any of the following circumstances:

(A) When the vehicle is a stolen vehicle.

(B) When the vehicle is subject to bailment and is driven by an unlicensed employee of a business establishment, including a parking service or repair garage.

(C) When the license of the driver was suspended or revoked for an offense other than those included in Article 2 (commencing with Section 13200) of Chapter 2 of Division 6 or Article 3 (commencing with Section 13350) of Chapter 2 of Division 6.

(D) When the vehicle was seized under this section for an offense that does not authorize the seizure of the vehicle.

(E) When the driver reinstates his or her driver's license or acquires a driver's license and proper insurance.

(2) No vehicle shall be released pursuant to this subdivision without presentation of the registered owner's or agent's currently valid driver's license to operate the vehicle and proof of current vehicle registration, or upon order of a court.

(e) The registered owner or his or her agent is responsible for all towing and storage charges related to the impoundment, and any administrative charges authorized under Section 22850.5.

(f) A vehicle removed and seized under subdivision (a) shall be released to the legal owner of the vehicle or the legal owner's agent prior to the end of 30 days' impoundment if all of the following conditions are met:

(1) The legal owner is a motor vehicle dealer, bank, credit union, acceptance corporation, or other licensed financial institution legally operating in this state or is another person, not the registered owner, holding a security interest in the vehicle.

(2) The legal owner or the legal owner's agent pays all towing and storage fees related to the seizure of the vehicle. No lien sale processing fees shall be charged to the legal owner who redeems the vehicle prior to the 15th day of impoundment. Neither the impounding authority nor any person having possession of the vehicle shall collect from the legal owner of the type specified in paragraph (1), or the legal owner's agent any administrative charges imposed pursuant to Section 22850.5 unless the legal owner voluntarily requested a poststorage hearing.

(3) The legal owner or the legal owner's agent presents a copy of the assignment, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 7500.1 of the Business and Professions Code, and any one of the following: a certificate of repossession for the vehicle, a security agreement for the vehicle, or title showing proof of legal ownership for the vehicle. Any documents presented may be originals, photocopies, or facsimile copies, or may be transmitted electronically. The law enforcement agency, impounding agency, or any person acting on behalf of those agencies shall not require any documents to be notarized. The law enforcement agency, impounding agency, or any person acting on behalf of those agencies may require the agent of the legal owner to produce a photocopy or facsimile copy of its repossession agency license or registration issued pursuant to Chapter 11 (commencing with Section 7500) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code, or to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the law enforcement agency, impounding agency, or any person acting on behalf of those agencies that the agent is exempt from licensure pursuant to Section 7500.2 or 7500.3 of the Business and Professions Code.

No administrative costs authorized under subdivision (a) of Section 22850.5 shall be charged to the legal owner of the type specified in paragraph (1), who redeems the vehicle unless the legal owner voluntarily requests a poststorage hearing. No city, county, city or county, or state agency shall require a legal owner or a legal owner's agent to request a poststorage hearing as a requirement for release of the vehicle to the legal owner or the legal owner's agent. The law enforcement agency, impounding agency, or any person acting on behalf of those agencies shall not require any documents other than those specified in this paragraph. The law enforcement agency, impounding agency, or any person acting on behalf of those agencies shall not require any documents to be notarized.

(g) (1) A legal owner or the legal owner's agent that obtains release of the vehicle pursuant to subdivision (f) may not release the vehicle to the registered owner of the vehicle or any agents of the registered owner, unless the registered owner is a rental car agency, until after the termination of the 30-day impoundment period.

(2) The legal owner or the legal owner's agent may not relinquish the vehicle to the registered owner until the registered owner or that owner's agent presents his or her valid driver's license or valid temporary driver's license to the legal owner or the legal owner's agent. The legal owner or the legal owner's agent shall make every reasonable effort to ensure that the license presented is valid.

(3) Prior to relinquishing the vehicle, the legal owner may require the registered owner to pay all towing and storage charges related to the impoundment and any administrative charges authorized under Section 22850.5 that were incurred by the legal owner in connection with obtaining custody of the vehicle.

(h) (1) A vehicle removed and seized under subdivision (a) shall be released to a rental car agency prior to the end of 30 days' impoundment if the agency is either the legal owner or registered owner of the vehicle and the agency pays all towing and storage fees related to the seizure of the vehicle.

(2) The owner of a rental vehicle that was seized under this section may continue to rent the vehicle upon recovery of the vehicle. However, the rental car agency may not rent another vehicle to the driver of the vehicle that was seized until 30 days after the date that the vehicle was seized.

(3) The rental car agency may require the person to whom the vehicle was rented to pay all towing and storage charges related to the impoundment and any administrative charges authorized under Section 22850.5 that were incurred by the rental car agency in connection with obtaining custody of the vehicle.

(i) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the registered owner and not the legal owner shall remain responsible for any towing and storage charges related to the impoundment, any administrative charges authorized under Section 22850.5, and any parking fines, penalties, and administrative fees incurred by the registered owner.

(j) The law enforcement agency and the impounding agency, including any tow yard acting on behalf of the law enforcement agency or impounding agency, shall not be liable to the registered owner for the improper release of the vehicle to the legal owner or the legal owner's agent provided the release complies with the provisions of this section.

SEC. 11. Section 14602.7 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

14602.7. (a) A magistrate presented with the affidavit of a peace officer establishing reasonable cause to believe that a vehicle, described by vehicle type and license number, was an instrumentality used in the peace officer's presence in violation of Section 2800.1, 2800.2, 2800.3, or 23103, shall issue a warrant or order authorizing any peace officer to immediately seize and cause the removal of the vehicle. The warrant or court order may be entered into a computerized database. A vehicle so impounded may be impounded for a period not to exceed 30 days.

The impounding agency, within two working days of impoundment, shall send a notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the legal owner of the vehicle, at the address obtained from the department, informing the owner that the vehicle has been impounded and providing the owner with a copy of the warrant or court order. Failure to notify the legal owner within two working days shall prohibit the impounding agency from charging for more than 15 days impoundment when a legal owner redeems the impounded vehicle.

(b) (1) An impounding agency shall release a vehicle to the registered owner or his or her agent prior to the end of the impoundment period and without the permission of the magistrate authorizing the vehicle's seizure under any of the following circumstances:

(A) When the vehicle is a stolen vehicle.

(B) When the vehicle is subject to bailment and is driven by an unlicensed employee of the business establishment, including a parking service or repair garage.

(C) When the registered owner of the vehicle causes a peace officer to reasonably believe, based on the totality of the circumstances, that the registered owner was not the driver who violated Section 2800.1, 2800.2, or 2800.3, the agency shall immediately release the vehicle to the registered owner or his or her agent.

(2) No vehicle shall be released pursuant to this subdivision, except upon presentation of the registered owner's or agent's currently valid driver's license to operate the vehicle and proof of current vehicle registration, or upon order of the court.

(c) (1) Whenever a vehicle is impounded under this section, the magistrate ordering the storage shall provide the vehicle's registered and legal owners of record, or their agents, with the opportunity for a poststorage hearing to determine the validity of the storage.

(2) A notice of the storage shall be mailed or personally delivered to the registered and legal owners within 48 hours after issuance of the warrant or court order, excluding weekends and holidays, by the person or agency

executing the warrant or court order, and shall include all of the following information:

(A) The name, address, and telephone number of the agency providing the notice.

(B) The location of the place of storage and a description of the vehicle, which shall include, if available, the name or make, the manufacturer, the license plate number, and the mileage of the vehicle.

(C) A copy of the warrant or court order and the peace officer's affidavit, as described in subdivision (a).

(D) A statement that, in order to receive their poststorage hearing, the owners, or their agents, are required to request the hearing from the magistrate issuing the warrant or court order in person, in writing, or by telephone, within 10 days of the date of the notice.

(3) The poststorage hearing shall be conducted within two court days after receipt of the request for the hearing.

(4) At the hearing, the magistrate may order the vehicle released if he or she finds any of the circumstances described in subdivision (b) or (e) that allow release of a vehicle by the impounding agency. The magistrate may also consider releasing the vehicle when the continued impoundment will cause undue hardship to persons dependent upon the vehicle for employment or to a person with a community property interest in the vehicle.

(5) Failure of either the registered or legal owner, or his or her agent, to request, or to attend, a scheduled hearing satisfies the poststorage hearing requirement.

(6) The agency employing the peace officer who caused the magistrate to issue the warrant or court order shall be responsible for the costs incurred for towing and storage if it is determined in the poststorage hearing that reasonable grounds for the storage are not established.

(d) The registered owner or his or her agent is responsible for all towing and storage charges related to the impoundment, and any administrative charges authorized under Section 22850.5.

(e) A vehicle removed and seized under subdivision (a) shall be released to the legal owner of the vehicle or the legal owner's agent prior to the end of the impoundment period and without the permission of the magistrate authorizing the seizure of the vehicle if all of the following conditions are met:

(1) The legal owner is a motor vehicle dealer, bank, credit union, acceptance corporation, or other licensed financial institution legally operating in this state or is another person, not the registered owner, holding a financial interest in the vehicle.

(2) The legal owner or the legal owner's agent pays all towing and storage fees related to the seizure of the vehicle. No lien sale processing fees shall be charged to the legal owner who redeems the vehicle prior to the 15th day of impoundment. Neither the impounding authority nor any person having possession of the vehicle shall collect from the legal owner of the type specified in paragraph (1), or the legal owner's agent any administrative

charges imposed pursuant to Section 22850.5 unless the legal owner voluntarily requested a poststorage hearing.

(3) The legal owner or the legal owner's agent presents a copy of the assignment, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 7500.1 of the Business and Professions Code, and any one of the following: a certificate of repossession for the vehicle, a security agreement for the vehicle, or title showing proof of legal ownership for the vehicle. Any documents presented may be originals, photocopies, or facsimile copies, or may be transmitted electronically. The law enforcement agency, impounding agency, or any person acting on behalf of those agencies shall not require any documents to be notarized. The law enforcement agency, impounding agency, or any person acting on behalf of those agencies may require the agent of the legal owner to produce a photocopy or facsimile copy of its repossession agency license or registration issued pursuant to Chapter 11 (commencing with Section 7500) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code, or to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the law enforcement agency, impounding agency, or any person acting on behalf of those agencies that the agent is exempt from licensure pursuant to Section 7500.2 or 7500.3 of the Business and Professions Code.

No administrative costs authorized under subdivision (a) of Section 22850.5 shall be charged to the legal owner of the type specified in paragraph (1), who redeems the vehicle unless the legal owner voluntarily requests a poststorage hearing. No city, county, city and county, or state agency shall require a legal owner or a legal owner's agent to request a poststorage hearing as a requirement for release of the vehicle to the legal owner or the legal owner's agent. The law enforcement agency, impounding agency, or any person acting on behalf of those agencies shall not require any documents other than those specified in this paragraph. The law enforcement agency, impounding agency, or any person acting on behalf of those agencies shall not require any documents to be notarized.

(f) (1) A legal owner or the legal owner's agent that obtains release of the vehicle pursuant to subdivision (e) shall not release the vehicle to the registered owner of the vehicle or any agents of the registered owner, unless a registered owner is a rental car agency, until the termination of the impoundment period.

(2) The legal owner or the legal owner's agent shall not relinquish the vehicle to the registered owner until the registered owner or that owner's agent presents his or her valid driver's license or valid temporary driver's license to the legal owner or the legal owner's agent. The legal owner or the legal owner's agent shall make every reasonable effort to ensure that the license presented is valid.

(3) Prior to relinquishing the vehicle, the legal owner may require the registered owner to pay all towing and storage charges related to the impoundment and the administrative charges authorized under Section 22850.5 that were incurred by the legal owner in connection with obtaining the custody of the vehicle.

(g) (1) A vehicle impounded and seized under subdivision (a) shall be released to a rental car agency prior to the end of the impoundment period if the agency is either the legal owner or registered owner of the vehicle and the agency pays all towing and storage fees related to the seizure of the vehicle.

(2) The owner of a rental vehicle that was seized under this section may continue to rent the vehicle upon recovery of the vehicle. However, the rental car agency shall not rent another vehicle to the driver who used the vehicle that was seized to evade a police officer until 30 days after the date that the vehicle was seized.

(3) The rental car agency may require the person to whom the vehicle was rented and who evaded the peace officer to pay all towing and storage charges related to the impoundment and any administrative charges authorized under Section 22850.5 that were incurred by the rental car agency in connection with obtaining custody of the vehicle.

(h) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the registered owner and not the legal owner shall remain responsible for any towing and storage charges related to the impoundment and the administrative charges authorized under Section 22850.5 and any parking fines, penalties, and administrative fees incurred by the registered owner.

(i) (1) This section does not apply to vehicles abated under the Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program pursuant to Sections 22660 to 22668, inclusive, and Section 22710, or to vehicles impounded for investigation pursuant to Section 22655, or to vehicles removed from private property pursuant to Section 22658.

(2) This section does not apply to abandoned vehicles removed pursuant to Section 22669 that are determined by the public agency to have an estimated value of three hundred dollars (\$300) or less.

(j) The law enforcement agency and the impounding agency, including any tow yard acting on behalf of the law enforcement agency or impounding agency, shall not be liable to the registered owner for the improper release of the vehicle to the legal owner or the legal owner's agent provided the release complies with the provisions of this section.

SEC. 12. Section 22850.5 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

22850.5. (a) A city, county, or city and county, or a state agency may adopt a regulation, ordinance, or resolution establishing procedures for the release of properly impounded vehicles and for the imposition of a charge equal to its administrative costs relating to the removal, impound, storage, or release of the vehicles. Those administrative costs may be waived by the local or state authority upon verifiable proof that the vehicle was reported stolen at the time the vehicle was removed.

(b) The following apply to any charges imposed for administrative costs pursuant to subdivision (a):

(1) The charges shall only be imposed on the registered owner or the agents of that owner and shall not include any vehicle towed under an abatement program or sold at a lien sale pursuant to Sections 3068.1 to 3074, inclusive, of, and Section 22851 of, the Civil Code unless the sale is

sufficient in amount to pay the lienholder's total charges and proper administrative costs.

(2) Any charges shall be collected by the local or state authority only from the registered owner or an agent of the registered owner.

(3) The charges shall be in addition to any other charges authorized or imposed pursuant to this code.

(4) No charge may be imposed for any hearing or appeal relating to the removal, impound, storage, or release of a vehicle unless that hearing or appeal was requested in writing by the registered or legal owner of the vehicle or an agent of that registered or legal owner. In addition, the charge may be imposed only upon the person requesting that hearing or appeal.

No administrative costs authorized under subdivision (a) shall be charged to the legal owner who redeems the vehicle unless the legal owner voluntarily requests a poststorage hearing. No city, county, city and county, or state agency shall require a legal owner or a legal owner's agent to request a poststorage hearing as a requirement for release of the vehicle to the legal owner or the legal owner's agent. The impounding agency, or any person acting on behalf of the agency, shall not require the legal owner or the legal owner's agent to produce any documents other than those specified in paragraph (3) of subdivision (f) of Section 14602.6 or paragraph (3) of subdivision (e) of Section 14602.7. The impounding agency, or any person acting on behalf of the agency, shall not require any documents to be notarized.

SEC. 13. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.

SEC. 14. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

In order to avoid at the earliest possible time potential obstacles to certain individuals purchasing, selling, leasing, or repossessing vehicles, it is necessary that this act take effect immediately.